

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**  
**REHABILITATION OF HENRY HOUSE**  
**MANASSAS NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD PARK**  
**VIRGINIA**

**United States Department of Interior**  
**National Park Service**

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## **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

### **Rehabilitation of Henry House**

#### **I. PURPOSE AND NEED**

This assessment evaluates three alternatives for the rehabilitation of the historic Henry House in Manassas National Battlefield Park. Modifications include partial restoration of the building to its circa 1890s form to restore the building's historic appearance and limited removal of fabric to meet requirements for public use and accessibility. The proposed modifications also provide for installing security and fire alarm systems to enhance resource protection, installing lighting, ventilation, and electric heating as needed for visitation, and altering entrances and door openings to achieve accessibility for disabled visitors. These modifications will improve the condition of this historic resource and allow for public access to the interior of the building for educational programs and exhibits, which will enhance the visitor experience in the park. In addition to the alterations to the Henry House, the proposed work includes adapting the non-historic shed for use as an accessible public restroom.

#### **II. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES**

##### **A. Background Data**

Manassas National Battlefield Park, a unit of the National Park Service, is located in Prince William County, about five miles north of the city of Manassas, Virginia (Figure 1). The park was established in 1940 to preserve the sites of the First and Second Battles of Manassas, two battles of the American Civil War. This project study area is located in the southeastern quadrant of the park near the Visitor Center. The suggested changes to this site will result in the rehabilitation of the historic Henry House to allow for public access to the site.

##### **B. Proposed Action**

The proposed work on the Henry House consists of rehabilitating the structure to allow for public access for the purpose of using the building as a discovery center. The discovery center will permit visitors to access the first floor and will provide space for small groups to attend curriculum-based education programs. The rehabilitated building will also provide space for storage for props and equipment for outdoor activities. When the building is not

being used for education programs, the house will be open to the general public for changing interpretive exhibits. The upstairs rooms will be used for offices for the expanded education staff and storage of education and interpretive program materials.

The rehabilitation work includes partial restoration of the building to its circa 1890s appearance (see Appendix B, page 13). Post-1890s alterations to the building will be removed to restore the structure to its appearance during the occupancy of the Hugh Henry household. In addition, missing or deteriorated features will be restored where possible. Exterior horizontal lapped siding will be restored to match historic siding appearing in late 19<sup>th</sup> century photographs of the house. (Some of this original siding survives on an interior wall of the house.) As the house historically was left unpainted, the exterior will not be painted but will be coated with a weathering gray, water repellent wood preservative. The existing metal roof will be removed and replaced with a wood shingle roof patterned after historic shingle samples located in the attic of the house. On the first floor, the missing floor system and architectural trim will be restored as will interior finishes on all walls, ceilings, and woodwork.

The work will also include modifications to the structure to allow for accessibility. Modifications include removal of fabric as needed for doors meeting the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) and an elevator for carrying staff and educational program materials. Creating an accessible entrance in accordance with ADAAG will result in the restoration of the original east entrance in the entrance hall and the removal of the existing bathroom, which was a modification to the original hall. The door opening will be wider than the historic entrance to meet ADAAG standards. Interior door openings leading from the hall to the parlor and from the parlor to the kitchen will require similar modification.

Additional work to the building includes the installation of electricity to power security and fire alarm systems to provide protection for the structure. Lighting will be installed to allow for the interior to be used for interpretive exhibits. Ventilation and electric heat will also be installed to allow for visitor use with minimal impact to the building. Other work at the site will include rehabilitation of the shed for use as public restrooms. The restrooms in the shed will be designed to include self-contained, composting, vault-type toilets.

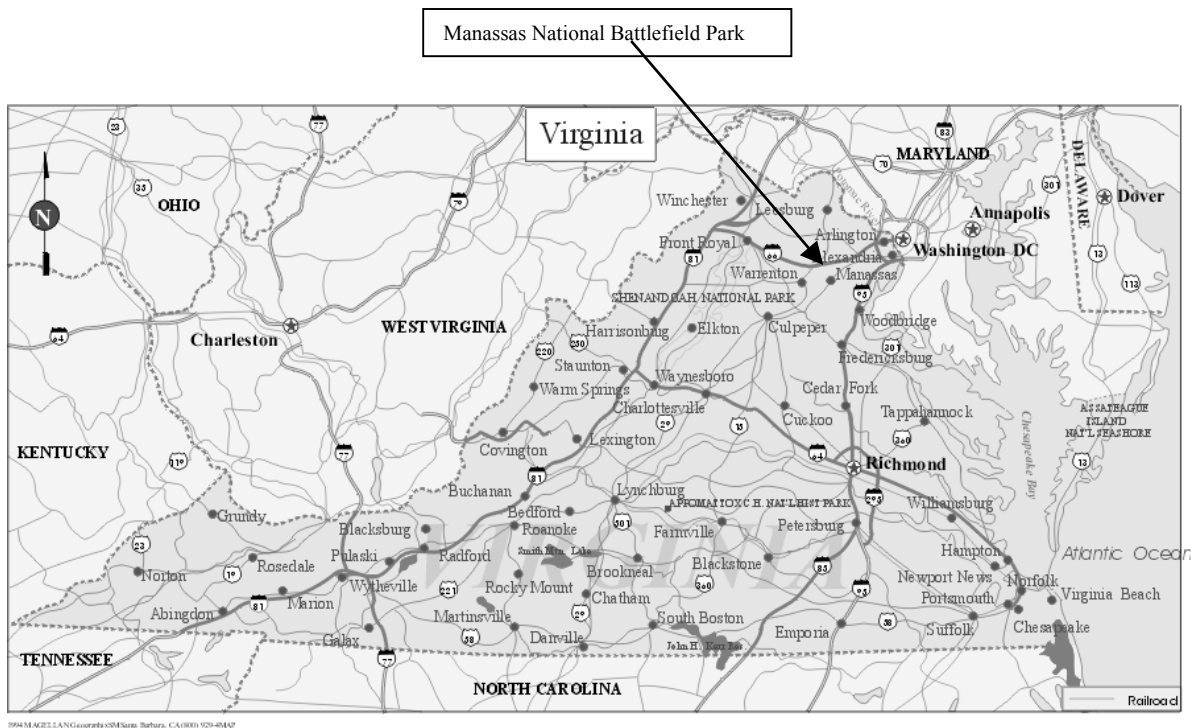


Figure 1. Location of Manassas National Battlefield Park.

## C. Alternatives

### *Alternative 1: Stabilize and Rehabilitate Structure without Public Access*

This alternative would provide for the rehabilitation of the historic Henry House without public access. This alternative would result in the restoration of the building exterior to its circa 1890s appearance during the occupancy of Hugh Henry. The interior would be repaired as needed to allow for its use for storage purposes, although some restoration would be needed in the stair hall in order to permit the exterior restoration of door and window openings. Security and fire alarm systems will be installed to enhance resource protection. This alternative would preserve the historic Henry House and allow its continued use as a site marker representing the site of the original antebellum Henry dwelling that was destroyed during the Civil War. This alternative would result in a minimum loss of historic fabric, as there would be no need to modify door openings for ADAAG doors or to remove fabric for the installation of an elevator. However, this alternative would not permit the building to be accessed by the public for educational or interpretive programs and would thus limit the site's utility as a key interpretive site.

### *Alternative 2: Rehabilitate Structure to Allow Public Access – Interpretive Exhibit Space*

This alternative would provide for the rehabilitation of the Henry House to allow the public

to access the interior to view interpretive exhibits related to the building and its history. Under this alternative both the exterior and interior would undergo restoration to the period of the Henry family occupancy in the 1890s. The first floor would be utilized as space for changing interpretive exhibits, and the second floor would be used for light storage only, eliminating the need for an elevator. This alternative would result in the loss of a limited amount of historic fabric as needed for the installation of ADAAG doors for accessibility to the first floor. In addition security and fire alarm systems will be installed to enhance resource protection. Lighting, ventilation, and electric heating would be installed to support the use of the building for interpretation. This alternative would preserve the historic house and allow the public to have access to the interior for interpretive purposes. However, this alternative would not provide for the use of the building for educational programs.

*Alternative 3: Rehabilitate Structure to Allow Public Access – Discovery Center*

This alternative would provide for the rehabilitation of the Henry House to allow the public to have access to the building as a “discovery center,” with the interior used for curriculum-based education programs and interpretive exhibits. Under this alternative both the exterior and interior would undergo rehabilitation work, to restore the house to its 1890s appearance as far as possible while allowing some modification to accommodate the use of the building as the focal point for the park’s educational programs. Modifications to the building would include loss of some fabric due to the need to install ADAAG doors for accessibility and an elevator or lift to assist the staff in transporting educational materials stored on the second floor. Alterations to the house may also include upgrading the floor system to withstand the additional load due to these uses. In addition security and fire alarm systems would be installed to enhance resource protection. Lighting, ventilation, and electric heating would be installed to support the use of the building for education programs and interpretation. The adjacent shed would be rehabilitated to accommodate restrooms for visitor convenience.

Although this alternative would result in the loss of some historic fabric, the building and its interior spaces would be rehabilitated to allow for the public to access the building for a wider range of programs. This alternative would allow for the expansion of the park’s educational program by providing a space for programs to be conducted throughout the year and in all weather conditions. This alternative would also permit the general public to have access to the interior for viewing interpretive exhibits at times when educational groups are not using the discovery center.

### **III. DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT**

#### **A. Nonliving Components**

##### *Climate*

Summers are warm and humid; winters are relatively mild. Generally pleasant weather

prevails in spring and autumn. Mean annual temperature is about 55 degrees (F) and ranges from 42 to 65. The coldest period, when minimum temperatures average 21 degrees, occurs in late January. The warmest period, when mean maximum temperature may reach 88 degrees, occurs in the last half of July. Annual precipitation has ranged from about 25 inches to more than 55 inches. Rainfalls of over 10 inches in a 24-hour period have been recorded during the passage of tropical storms. The seasonal snowfall is nearly 24 inches but varies greatly from season to season. Snowfalls of 4 inches or more occur only twice each winter on the average. Accumulations of over 20 inches from a single storm are extremely rare. Prevailing winds are from the south except during the winter months when they are from the northwest with the highest average wind speed occurring in March at 9.1 mph.

### *Land*

- a. **Soils** - According to the Soil Survey of Prince William County, Virginia, the soil type for the study area consists of Arcola silt loam soils. The Arcola soils are a moderately deep and well-drained soil. They are very strongly acidic to medium acidic.
- b. **Geology** - The Park lies within the Triassic basin of the northern Virginia Piedmont.
- c. **Geography** - The Park is located in the Piedmont region of northern Virginia. The elevation of the project area is approximately 270 feet.
- d. **Land Use** - The project area, located in the southeastern quadrant of the park on the east side of Sudley Road (Virginia Route 234) and north of the Visitor Center, includes the historic Henry House and its associated yard. Historical background on the Henry property is provided in the 1996 Parsons report detailing the cultural landscape inventory of the southern portion of Manassas National Battlefield Park and in the 2001 Vitanza historic structure report.

In 1822 Dr. Isaac Henry and his wife, Judith Carter Henry, inherited the property known as Spring Hill from Judith's sister Elizabeth Carter, and they established their home on the farm by the mid 1820s. Following Isaac's untimely death in 1829, Judith continued to operate the modest farm, living in the small frame dwelling that had been constructed around 1812. By the eve of the Civil War, Judith was residing on the 100-acre farm with two of her adult children and other family members and one slave from a neighboring farm.

Detailed documentation of the role that the Henry farm played in the Civil War battles of Manassas is provided in the Bearss and Hennessey troop movement map studies. During the First Battle of Manassas on July 21,

1861, the farm witnessed the climactic fighting of the battle as Union forces encountered fierce resistance from Confederate reinforcements arriving from the area of Manassas Junction. In an effort to clear Confederates from the area of the Henry farmstead, Capt. James Ricketts' Union battery fired on the Henry House at close range, leaving the house badly damaged. Judith Henry also fell victim to the shelling. Confined to her bed, Mrs. Henry was unable to be moved to safety, and she was mortally wounded. The fighting on the farm intensified as both armies struggled to maintain their hold on Henry Hill. Ultimately the Confederates extended their lines westward across the Sudley Road to Chinn Ridge, where they repulsed the final Union brigade (Howard's), precipitating the Federal retreat from the battlefield.

By the time of the Second Battle of Manassas (August 28-30, 1862), the Henry House lay in ruins. Again the farm played a critical role in the fighting during the final phase of the second battle on August 30, 1862. As Maj. Gen. James Longstreet's wing of the Confederate army launched a sweeping counterattack against the Union army under Maj. Gen. John Pope, Federal troops resisted the Southern onslaught, first on Chinn Ridge, and finally on the slopes of Henry Hill facing Sudley Road. The Union defense of Henry Hill prevented the Confederates from blocking the Federal route of retreat and enabled Pope to direct his army to safety across Bull Run.

Following the war Judith Henry's son, Hugh F. Henry, returned to the family farm and erected a new dwelling at the site of the original house around 1870. This second house was expanded by the construction of an addition before 1884. The Henry family continued to own the farm through the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and began to welcome visitors and returning veterans visiting the site of the Manassas battles.

In 1922 the Henry family sold the house and farm to the Sons of Confederate Veterans for the establishment of a privately operated battlefield park, the Manassas Battlefield Confederate Park, and the house served as a museum for the fledgling park. In 1940 the Sons of Confederate Veterans deeded the farm to the National Park Service. On May 10, 1940, the Henry farm and surrounding properties totaling more than 1,600 acres were designated Manassas National Battlefield Park.

Today the Henry farm remains the centerpiece of the battlefield park, which has grown to encompass 5,072 acres. Following acquisition of the farm in 1940, the National Park Service in 1941-42 erected a museum and administration building south of the house, and this building now serves as the park's visitor center. An interpretive loop trail encircles Henry Hill and provides access to the grounds of the Henry House and other significant sites connected to the First Battle of Manassas.



Under NPS ownership, the Henry House was adapted for use as park quarters in the 1940s and served this purpose until the 1960s. The NPS during this period modified the appearance of the building by replacing the unpainted, horizontal lapped siding with German siding and painting the exterior white. The project will restore the exterior of the building to its appearance during the Henry ownership and will rehabilitate the interior to allow for public access and use of the building as a discovery center.

## **B. Living Components**

### *Vegetation*

The Henry House is located within a large field that consists of a mix of Indian grass and fescue pasture. Much of the pasture South of Henry House is mowed by the maintenance staff throughout the summer months. Adjacent areas of the field are mowed annually through an agricultural lease.

### *Wildlife*

A list of animal species known or likely to use the habitat of the park is included in the 1987 Manassas National Battlefield Park Forest Management Plan. Many common species of wildlife have been observed near this site. Species included Songbirds, Whitetail Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), Eastern Cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*), Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), squirrels, opossums, and raccoons. No rare or endangered species have been identified in the study area.

### *Human Population Density*

The park has an annual visitation of approximately 800,000 visitors who spend anywhere from 30 minutes to 6 hours in the park. The heaviest concentrations of visitors come to the park on weekends. There is a 42-mile trail system in the park that allows visitors easy access

to nearly all portions of the Park. Primary access is by automobile, with secondary access from horse, motorcycle, and foot traffic. A one-mile interpretive loop trail provides pedestrian access to the Henry House and other sites associated with the fighting on Henry Hill during the First Battle of Manassas. This interpretive trail receives heavy use as it is the primary means by which visitors tour the First Manassas battlefield.

#### **IV. ANALYSIS OF PROPOSED ACTION**

##### **A. Alternative 3: Preferred Alternative**

Due to ground disturbing activities related to the rehabilitation of the Henry House, the National Park Service initiated an archeological investigation of the site in the fall of 2001. The archeological investigation encompasses historical research, archeological fieldwork, laboratory processing of artifacts, and artifact cataloging and analysis. Completion of the investigation will result in the production of a final report documenting the findings. The National Park Service will undertake formal consultation with the Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to address the potential effects that may arise from the project.

The impact this project may have on visitors touring the area during the construction process will be short-term and minimal, as access to the existing interpretive loop trail will continue throughout the project. Low noise distraction will occur from construction-related activities at the Henry House. The pedestrian trail will also continue to provide access to the vicinity of the Henry House, although portions of the immediate grounds may be inaccessible for brief periods during construction work. Impacts to the natural environment will be minimal in the area of the proposed action.

#### **V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Environmental Assessment for this project will be advertised for a 30-day public review. A press release will be issued to the local newspapers advertising the availability of copies of this Environmental Assessment, Rehabilitation of the Henry House, to local libraries and through the Internet at [www.nps.gov/mana/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/mana/index.htm).

## **VI. LIST OF PREPARERS**

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Stephen Potter, Ph.D.  
Regional Archeologist  
National Capital Region

## VIII. APPENDIXES

### A. References

National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior

- 2001        *Henry House Historic Structure Report*. Prepared by Tom Vitanza. Historic Preservation Training Center, Frederick, Maryland.
- 1996        *Cultural Landscape Inventory: Southern Portion, Manassas National Battlefield Park*. Prepared by Mia Parsons. Falls Church Office, Denver Service Center, Falls Church, Virginia.
- 1989        *Soil Survey of Prince William County, Virginia, USDOA, Soil Conservation Service*.
- 1987        *Manassas National Battlefield Park Forest Management Plan*, North American Resource Management, Charlottesville, Virginia
- 1985        *Historical Report On the Troop Movements for the Second Battle of Manassas, August 28 Through August 30, 1862*. Prepared by John Hennessy. Denver Service Center, Denver.
- 1981        *Troop Movement Maps: Battle of First Manassas and Engagement at Blackburn's Ford, July 18 and 21, 1861*. Prepared by Edwin C. Bearss. Denver Service Center, Denver.

**B. Photographs**



**Henry House, 1896**

(Albert Kern Collection, Montgomery County Historical Society, Dayton, Ohio)



**Henry House, 2001**  
(National Park Service)



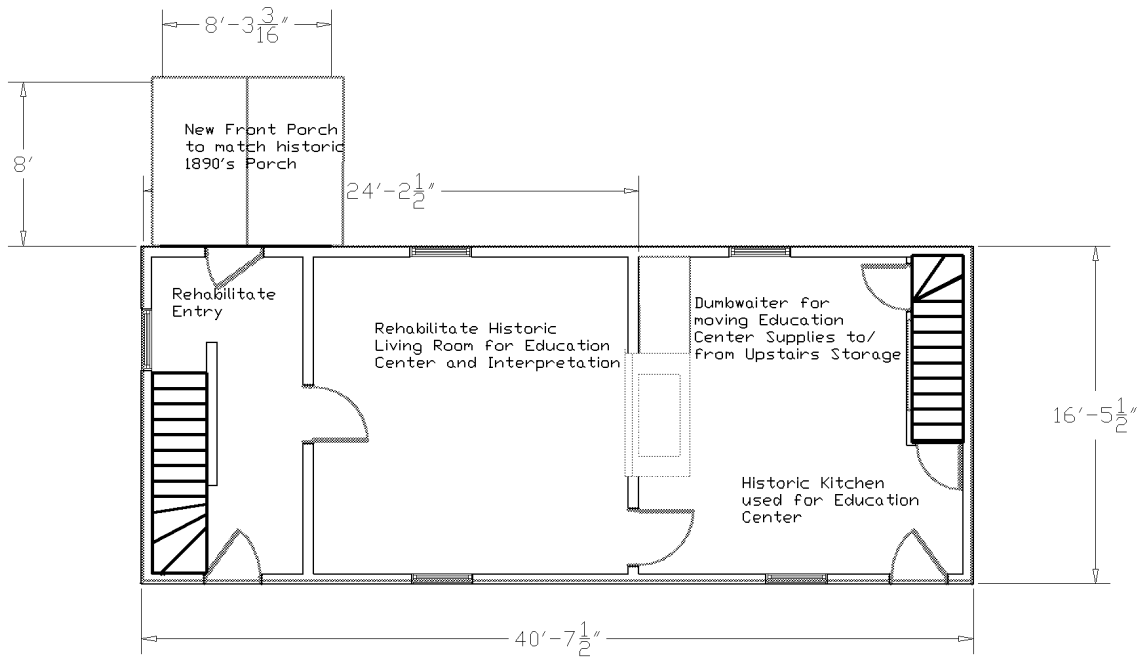
**Henry House, 2001**  
(National Park Service)



**Henry Shed, 2003**  
(National Park Service)

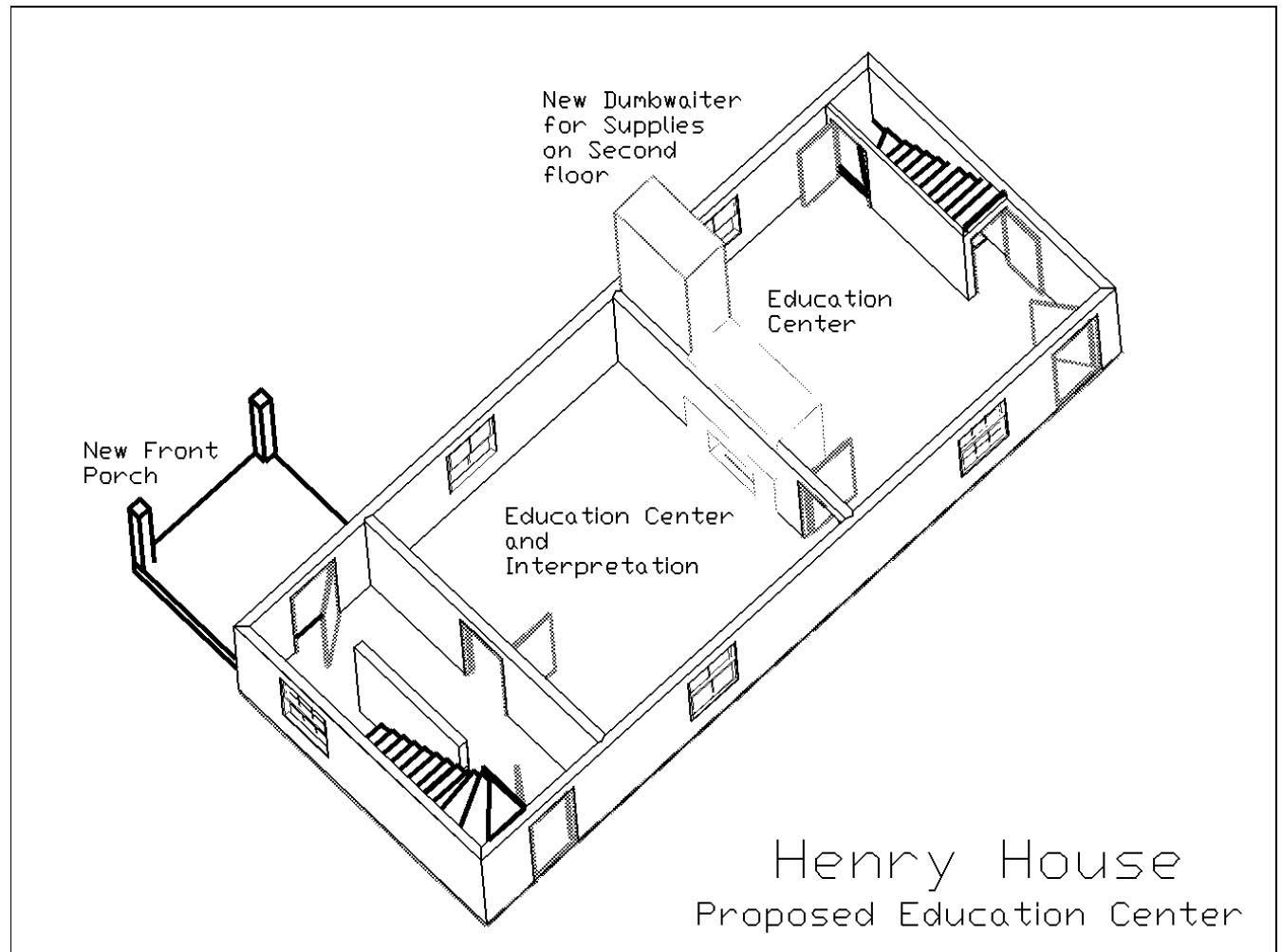


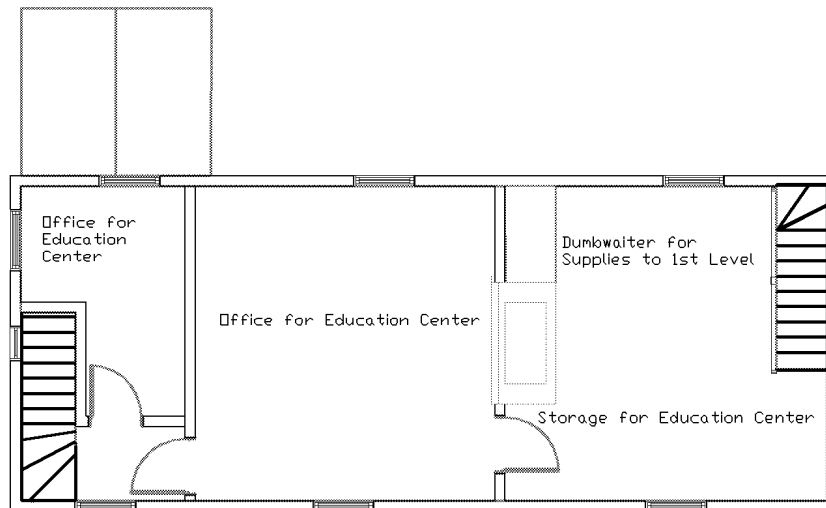
### C. Drawings and Floorplans for Preferred Alternative



1st Floor Plan

Henry House  
Proposed Education Center





2nd Floor Plan

**Henry House**  
Proposed Education Center

